# UNITY

*FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION*


Could There Be Christmas Without Christ?
- - - - - - - *Victor R. Seymour*

The State of Poetry - - - - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - *Devere Allen*

The Influence of Charles Dickens Upon Christmas - - - - - - *Leonard B. Gray*

An Ethical Paradox - - - - - - - - - -
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## THE FIELD

### Oil Vexes Japanese

BY TETSUICHI KURASHIGE

If oil is supposed to reduce friction, that is not the way it is working out in present-day Japan, for as Premier Yoshida travels abroad, he has left no more irritating problem behind him. Anyone who has been encouraged to install oil-burning heat for homes or industry, then told to go back to coal, can understand how many of the people feel.

The petroleum industry is one of the key economic factors in Japan. It must, however, depend upon foreign imports for 90 per cent of its supply. Some of the leading refiners are tied up to foreign oil firms by capital investment and technical assistance. But even such a tie-up offers little help in the procurement of crude oil under the current tight economy.

Because of acute shortages in the government's dollar holdings, and because most of the crude oil is paid for in dollars, the operation of the industry is greatly hampered. When the industry was allowed to rehabilitate itself and resume operations during the Allied occupation, distribution and prices of oil products were controlled. As the market stabilized, controls were gradually lifted. Funds for the import of crude oil are allocated by the government to each refinery on the basis of its actual productive capacity, but where foreign exchange is tight, allocation of funds is restricted.

Coal is the industry's main competitor. Since July, 1952, under its fuel policy, the government has encouraged the use of fuel oil instead of coal. Meanwhile the demand for petroleum increased because of the coal and electric power strikes of last December. As compared to coal, the use of fuel oil is more economical and convenient. The government toyed with the idea of increasing the allocation of funds for fuel oil imports.

But then, after this policy had been in force for a year and a half, the government suddenly changed its mind. It stopped advocating a changeover to oil. The coal industry lobbied for the revival of customs duties on imported oil products to check its use. The latest government maneuver is to curtail the import and consumption of fuel oil, and re-

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# UNITY

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## EDITORIAL

Six percent of Americans have a perfect right to petition Congress against the censure of Senator McCarthy. And the other ninety-four percent have a perfect right to regard the six percent as emotionally immature and politically scrambled. But we should not underrate the significance of ten million political irresponsibles, especially when they are backed by from twenty to thirty honorable senators. They constitute a force sufficient to wield the balance of power in closely contested elections. They are persistent, vociferous, and fanatical. They are a real danger to American democracy. Already they have thrown fright into the body politic. Some colleges and universities are afraid to debate controversial issues. Some people are afraid to be caught walking down the street with their liberal neighbors. But this situation will not last. Already there are striking signs of the return of sanity. The Vice President of the United States could not win the November election by viciously accusing good men of subversive associations and tendencies. The Senate is determined to curb McCarthy. Undoubtedly the next session of the Senate will adopt a code of senatorial conduct. A brave judge has called the hand of the Department of Justice. Important columnists and news commentators are outspoken in behalf of traditional American ideals and principles of conduct. But unfortunately damage that has been done cannot be undone. The disgraceful dismissal of Davies is a blot on the record of the Department of State. The removal of security clearance from Oppenheimer was a poor way to repay that great scientist for his atomic contribution to American defense. The outrageous verbal thrashing given to General Zwicker can never be atoned for. The best that can now be done is to see to it that things like these cease to happen, and that the civil rights that are embedded in the Constitution are respected and obeyed. An awakened citizenship can see to it that public figures violate the code of common decency and integrity at their own peril. No law can teach a demagogue civil manners, but an intelligent electorate can return him to private life.

Curtis W. Reese.

# Could There Be Christmas Without Christ?

VICTOR R. SEYMOUR

At the 1951 session of the Lake Geneva Summer Assembly the principal speaker, during whose hour no other classes were scheduled, was Professor Angus MacLean, Chairman of the Department of Religion at the Universalist St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Although at first the name, Angus MacLean, bore little meaning for many persons attending the Conference, it became apparent at the opening lecture of his series on the subject, "The Liberal Church As an Educational Institution," that here was a teacher possessed of such genuine scholarship as to inspire the respect of laymen and ministers alike. One cannot soon forget the vigor with which he drove home the point of that first address to the Conference.

Professor MacLean reported that one of his graduate students had been conducting research leading toward his dissertation in the field of comparative religion. It had been the student's aim to discover (1) how generally in churches of the United States were efforts being made to present the positive values of the other great religions of the world, those outside of the Judeo-Christian orbit, and (2) what methods were being pursued by the different church bodies in making such presentation. After months of exhaustive endeavor which led the student into many sections of the United States either directly or by mail, the young man returned to Professor MacLean with such disquieting news as to require the abandonment of the entire project and the substitution of an entirely different subject for the dissertation. The student's report was that aside from churches of the Unitarian and the Universalist denominations, there was no consistent effort being made in the churches of America today to acquaint their communicants with the positive values of other leading religions. As Professor MacLean was forced to explain to his dejected student, where there were no facts there could be no dissertation.

The Professor closed his first address with a plea to the churches to overcome this ignorance and this hauteur, which have permeated all phases of our national being, from editorial policies of our newspapers to pronouncements of public officials, from the halls of Congress to the fireside councils of the quiet homes of our land; and his peroration sounded a ringing cry for intellectual honesty in our religions today.

"Intellectual honesty in religion": the words fall strangely on the ear. The plea is almost ironic in its implication that anything which is as high-minded, as weighted with values of rich idealism, as are our great religions, could be approached in any spirit other than one of intellectual honesty. And yet, as the disillusioned student discovered so disastrously to his time, effort and peace of mind, quite the contrary is the case. No clearer, no readier example of this thesis can be given than by allusion to the general attitude toward, and the real, intrinsic values of, this great religious holiday known as "Christmas, the most brilliant festival of the Christian Church, celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

At the outset, let us clear our minds on three fundamental propositions, basic to an honest approach to an understanding of Christmas.

(1). No one knows when Christ was born,—no historian, no astronomer, certainly no religionist,—despite dogmatic assertions to the contrary. No one knows the year, no one knows the month, no one knows the day.

The Russians, we realize, claim to be first in a great many things. Well, it was a Russian monk, Dionysius, nicknamed Exiguus, or "the Little," who introduced the practice of reckoning dates from the year of Christ's birth, just as orthodox Jews reckon from the supposed date of Creation, Moslems from the Hegira or flight of Mohammed from Medina to Mecca in the year 622, and just as dates prior to Dionysius' time, about the year 533, had been reckoned from the date of the supposed founding of Rome—753 B.C. But "Little" Dionysius got us off to a bad start by miscalculating the date of Christ's birth. While authorities dispute as to the actual year—and claims have been made ranging all the way from the year 3 A.D. back as far as 10 or 12 B.C.—authorities are agreed in finding Dionysius Exiguus wrong.

Luke says Christ was born "in the days of Herod the King." Historians affirm that King Herod died at least three years before 1 A.D. Others attempting to relate the birth of Christ to the known times of Census-taking in the Roman world, also mentioned in the gospel stories, present us with even earlier dates. Astronomers or astrologers have tried to fix the time by the supposed position of the stars. There is scant wonder at all this discrepancy in dates when one realizes that at the time of Christ there were no less than five recognized systems of reckoning years that were current in the civilized world. An English commentator (Michael Harrison) in a book published in 1952, *The Story of Christmas,* makes the bland but unsupported assertion: "Modern scholarship inclines to the date of the Nativity, for astronomical and other reasons, at 2 A.M., 16-17 May, 8 B.C."

(2). In the second place, Jesus himself seems to have held a singular disregard for birthdays. We fail to find mention in the gospels of any birthday celebration in his household or of any particular observance of birthdays generally. Certain ages are noted. At the age of twelve he was taken to the temple in Jerusalem, presumably for his bar mizvah. At thirty he was baptized by John the Baptist, at which time the Holy Spirit was said to have descended upon him. In fact, the early Church considered that Christ was a god only from this baptismal date. The dogma of "god from birth" was not introduced until much later.

(3). In addition to the historical uncertainty as to the date of Christ's birth, and to Jesus' own disinterest in the date, even the early Christian Church itself—which largely remade Jesus to suit its needs and conveniences—not only had no observance of such a birthdate, but actually forbade its celebration. It was in the year "245 that the Great Church Father, Origen, declared it to be a sin even to think of keeping the birthday of Christ, 'as though he were a king Pharaoh'." As late as 742 Pope Zacharius issued an edict, "prohibiting the participation of Christians in the heathenish customs" of the people at this season.

But St. Zacharius nor anyone else could halt the annual celebration of Christmas. In fact, this eighth cen-

tury papal ordinance itself called attention to the cause of its own failure, for Christmas was surely a custom of the people at this season. Christmas so far antedated Zacharius that he could only stand impotently before its mighty surge. Christmas antedated Origen, for Christmas antedated Christ.

Back to the beginning of time ran Christmas! Early man, chained to nature, loving yet fearing those great elemental forces of which he felt himself to be so much a part, and yet of which he stood so much in awe, annually broke forth in wild rejoicing when it became apparent that the heroic life-giving sun had not died in the bleak December sky. Or, if he had died, the sun god was reborn gradually to grow back into the strong, life preserving, life-giving god that he was. From the standing still of the sun, *sol stitium,* solstice, there came the return of the sun. People rejoiced because they knew that once more life would spring up in the earth, men and beasts alike could live again.

Suppose the sun should not return this year. Suppose it should continue to stand still for two days, for a week, for a month. What horror in contemplation! What profound emotional exuberance when the sun did successfully pass the solstice! What a tremendously religious experience, binding all men together from fear, to hope, to life forever more!

The ancient Egyptians celebrated Christmas. Only, they called it the birthday of Horus, son of Isis. If Horus, the sun god, had not been born, how could we have the *hours* of the day?

The Celtic Druids at Stonehenge and Avebury celebrated Christmas. Torches blazed to help the weakened sun back to life. Worshippers brought the evergreen holly, symbol of continuing life. They cut the holy mistletoe, so sacred that it must never touch the ground; with incantation and blessing of priest they broke it into many pieces, so that each follower might have a branch of its divine favor, the blessing of nature upon plant and animal fertility.

The Romans celebrated Christmas. Only, they called it the Saturnalia, in honor of the birth of the great Saturnus, god of agriculture and germination, whose reign was characterized by happiness and virtue. Why, how could even a week be closed without Saturday? Candles were lighted; the evergreen laurel was brought to adorn the house, where the tree was decorated with dangling trinkets to impart fertility to all sides; presents were freely given, especially to children; rich and poor men mingled without distinction; slaves became as free men while their masters waited upon them; the courts of justice were closed and no one was convicted of a crime; and everyone made merry.

The ancient Jews celebrated Christmas. Only, they called it the Festival of Lights, Hanukkah. On the 25th day of the month Kislev, or December, the purification of the temple in Jerusalem had been completed by Judas Maccabeus after he had vanquished the Syrian overlords there. The sacred light was re-lit and the ensuing celebration ended on December 25 just as the Roman Saturnalia had ended on December 25, which was mistakenly thought to be the winter solstice. Lighted candles played an important part in this Festival of Lights.

The Teutons and Nordics, the Slavs and the Finns celebrated Christmas. Only, they called it Yule and they honored the goddess Hertha, or Bertha, in the doing. How could we enjoy a roaring fire on the *hearth,* if Hertha had not been born? A great fire of fir boughs and the holy Yule log was laid and Hertha descended through the smoke to spread good cheer, a function which Santa Claus in later years seized directly from her hands, in a rather ungallant fashion.

The ancient Babylonians, Mesopotamians, Medes, and Persians all celebrated Christmas. Only, they called it the birthday of the righteous sun god Mazda. If he had not been born, how could we ever have lighted our homes with Mazda lamps? Mazda had become Mithras, but the religion of Mithraism was a lineal descendant of Zoroastrianism, one of the most ancient religions in the world. While it had come far from being merely a sun-worshipping cult, while it contained elements rich in high ethical content, it continued to recognize December 25 as the birthday of the god Mithras.

Of exceeding importance was this religion in the Roman world at the time of Christ. Already the brilliant Mithras had toppled the Greco-Roman gods from their Olympian thrones as far as the soldiering, slave, and poor classes were concerned. It offered to downtrodden peoples a great hope of life after death, where all wrongs would be righted. Roman legions carried Mithraism to Hadrian's wall in the North of England, where they found they could speak in its terms to the wild Celts beyond; for somehow Mithras had slipped around the outer rim of the Roman empire and was said to have infiltrated Valhalla and the sacred Druidian groves.

Also had Mithraism infiltrated the religion of Judeo-Christianity. While the Jews were held captive in Babylon, elements of Mithraism crept into their services, as seen by the writings of the prophet Ezekiel. The importance of candles to the worship of God, the belief in a heaven of delight and a hell of torture, the belief in a devil who constantly sought to lead men from God's will,—all these came into Judaism from Mithraism.

Mithraism not only had a strong moral content, as witnessed by the present-day Parsees who are living descendants of Zoroaster's faith, but Mithraism also depended much on miracles and magic. One of the purposes of writing the early gospels—especially the book of Mark, but to some extent also Matthew and Luke—was to give the budding new religion about Jesus strength to compete with the miracles of the Orient. Thus forty or fifty years after Jesus' death we find Mark laying great emphasis upon the miracles which Christ performed. A decade or two later Matthew and Luke do something the same, adding the story of the divine birth which had not occurred to Mark but which was important for the survival of a god in those days of theocratic warfare. Performing miracles, working magic, being saved through the blood of the Lord, the adoration of the shepherds and of the Magi or astrologers, all these concepts came into the religion about Jesus from Mithraism and fitted superbly into the non-scientific climate of the times.

Thus the new Christianity had at birth large reservoirs of strength. From the words of Jesus himself it had as high an ethical content as any religion the world had ever known. Paul's letters, added to the comforting and uplifting teachings of Jesus, gave it increasing popular appeal. But this was not enough. The organized Church itself must capture and appropriate as much of the people's own religious experience as possible. This the Church did with the great festival of the returning sun, as it also did with the festival of

the vernal equinox, thus finally assuring the Church's own immortality.

St. Gregory wrote advising St. Augustine "to accommodate the ceremonies of the Christian as much as possible to those of the heathen." About the middle of the fourth century, December 25 became fixed as the birthday of Christ in the Western world, though not in the Armenian Church until the twentieth century.

Taking one more shot at the rival Mithras, St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, wrote in 386, "They called this December 25 the Birthday of the Invincible One (Mithras); but who was so invincible as the Lord? They call it the Birthday of the Solar Disc; but Christ is the Son of Righteousness." With that salvo, Mithras capitulated in Europe.

The glorious survival of Christmas down through the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages, the Modern Ages, is one long story of happiness, good will, and festivity. Modern religion has built upon the firm foundation of natural awe in the presence of new life, or returning life, a scintillating superstructure whose broad beams are human kindness and love, and whose adornments are the graceful arches and varicolored windows of all the arts.

From high in the cloistered belfry there peels forth across a rejoicing world the glad strains of the music of men at peace, of men who think kindly and act nobly one to another. This music sounds out in two dissimilar strains, sometimes showing the full chorded harmony of perfect counterpoint, of classic polyphony, at other times making cacophonous dissonance, but always thoroughly enjoyed by the makers and hearers of music.

One strain is the music which has welled up naturally in the common people as an expression of their joy in life, their faith in the ultimate virtues of goodness and mercy and love. The other strain is the music of great cathedrals, the music of organized religion, the music of the churches, which expresses the hope of an ordered society in a new-born god or savior. Sometimes these is a subtle poignancy in the occasional discordance between these strains.

Could there be Christmas without Christ? Of course there could be. There was Christmas for milleniums before Christ and there will be Christmas down the ages as far as man can see. But the presence of the wise and understanding Jesus, the Jesus who loved little children, the Jesus who forgave sinners and told the lowliest that they would be first, the Jesus whose love went out to *all* mankind—his presence has provided a benign, an elevating influence upon the celebration of Christmas which cannot be measured.

Does the intellectual recognition of the pre-Christian origin of Christmas and the non-Christian nature of most of its observances in any wise diminish its emotional content and spiritual worth today? On the contrary, when one views the long scope of human history, when one peers behind the heavy draperies of recorded time, one's eyes are dazzled by the splendor of this human pageant. In it all men have joyful parts—the Christian, the Jew, the Parsee, the "heathen, thousands of miles afar"—the worshippers of Adonis and Osiris, of Balder the Good and of Brigid the Beautiful—as well as the worshippers of all the golden, martial, and luminary gods which claim men's devotions today. All at Christmas time are equal, hopeful, good and true. All are brothers together in one vast, transcendental celebration of the worth of life on earth.

In spirit we touch hands with all mankind, living and dead, at Christmas. Or, as the poet Murray says:

> Ah, friends, dear friends, as years go on and heads get gray, how fast the guests do go!
> Touch hands, touch hands, with those that stay.
> Strong hands to weak, old hands to young, around the Christmas board, touch hands.
> The false forget, the foe forgive, for every guest will go and every fire burn low and cabin empty stand.
> Forget, forgive, for who may say that Christmas day may ever come to host or guest again.
> Touch hands!

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# The State of Poetry

DEVERE ALLEN

A renaissance of know-nothingism, even if it seems like a contradiction in terms, is definitely in the making. The news magazines and daily papers are printing more and more letters in which the ultimate epithet is "egg-head," that most recent symbol of intellectualism. Most letters that come to this column are kind, while critical ones are often deserved. The nasty ones always have the "egg-head" approach. Some pompous dope who has spent less than ten minutes on a complex issue, and shows it, bawls you out because you have given, to an understanding of it, sweat, tears, and eyestrain.

In this foul climate of discussion, you may as well be warned. If you like, you may now stop reading and go back to playing with your blocks. For there will be, in what follows, a few kind words for poetry and its international significance. From the viewpoint of the Great Majority, no one could sink lower. Which may explain in part, however, why we find ourselves in such a negative phase of world politics, earthbound and uncreative in discovering solutions for international problems, and usually late with solutions when we propose them.

If you haven't noticed the decline in poetry, it may be because you couldn't care less. Here's what the Oxford University Press says in its bright but egg-headish little paper, *The Periodical:* "English readers as a body have turned their backs on new poetry with a degree of determination that is little short of unanimous." This publishing house speaks nostalgically of the late 1600's and the early years of the twentieth century, when bringing out poetry was profitable because the public flocked to buy it.

It is the same in the United States. Says Louis Untermeyer, in that fine inter-American monthly, *Américas,* "Even the most chauvinistic admirer of North American culture must be unhappy about the state of contemporary poetry in the U.S.A. . . . In most of the countries of Europe and South America, poetry is not only understood but appreciated; what is more, it is popular." One might add that in Latin America and parts of Europe, poets are granted a social standing, and often a leadership in thought and affairs, almost inconceivable to those lands where a poet is only one thin step above a pervert. But, alas, even that Chilean

Nobel Prize winner, Gabriela Mistral, said the other day, "Latin American poetry is going through a stage of decadence, since no new great poets are arising and quality is falling." For poets and egg-heads, things are getting tough all over.

You can say that this is all the fault of present-day poets, but you won't be convincing, because you don't read them, and hardly read the oldtimers—unless you're a rare exception. No, it must be feared the real trouble lies much deeper. As a brilliant Italian said, "We are living in an age of prose." By that, he meant we have turned "practical," that we over-emphasize technics and utility, that we magnify power rather than subtlety and imagination. In short, that the very qualities we need most urgently for an inspired direction of foreign policy and international relations are the aspects of life we are repudiating all along the line.

There have been poets, it is true, who when elevated to key posts appeared impractical to the degree of being fumbling. One such was the late Premier Azaña of Republican Spain, who with a firmer hand might have averted the gathering of Fascist forces and prevented the civil war. But on the whole, a people which loves poetry and reveres poets should have the wit to see through humbugging politicians, cut across the illusions of power politics, and know dictatorships for the idiocies they are. The real world revolution will bring the poets back, and banish know-nothingism from world relations. Truth is in Pope's words:

Vain was the chief's, the sage's pride;
They had no poet, and they died.

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# The Influence of Charles Dickens Upon Christmas

LEONARD B. GRAY

When Charles Dickens died in 1870 the news saddened countless people, including many little children, throughout the British Empire and the United States. One small boy asked, "Is Mr. Dickens dead? And will Father Christmas die, too?"

That remark and many other remarks of a similar nature showed how the people had identified Christmas with Dickens. This great and popular English novelist had put so much humanity and love for human welfare, so much goodwill and good cheer, so much joy and happiness into Christmas, and had thereby directed the minds of the masses to the essential human values of Christmas that the people just naturally and spontaneously put Christmas and Dickens together in their minds.

Instead of Christmas dying with Dickens, Christmas has been made continuously more alive and meaningful since his death through the influence that this great humanitarian left in the world. Along with countless other people the writer of this article and you readers are quite a bit more active these days giving to churches and needy people, putting up Christmas trees and decorations, sending cards and gifts to loved ones and friends, buying, cooking (or else rejoicing in the cooking), attending parties, and singing carols because of the joyous and stimulating Christmas atmosphere Dickens created and set agoing in the lives of men. Indeed, the beloved Charles Dickens dramatized and humanized Christmas as no other person ever did and probably did more for this wonderful season than anyone else save the Christ.

To a large degree most writers grow out of their early environments. And so it is more than likely that one of the main reasons why the human values, material necessities, and essential joys that belong to the true Christmas appear so abundantly in this author's novels is that they were denied him during much of his boyhood. To be sure this writer who was born at Landport in Portsea, England, on February 7, 1812, experienced a reasonable amount of plenty, comfort, and happiness for the first ten years of his life. His father, as an employee in the pay department of the British Navy, earned about three hundred and fifty pounds a year, a good salary for those days. But this man was easygoing and extravagant and consequently spent his money quickly and unwisely. Shortly after he moved to London with his family he was arrested and thrown into prison for his debts. His wife and his children experienced several severely hard years. At a time when boys were made to work long and hard days and were not infrequently ill-treated by their employers, young Charles—hitherto used to carefree roaming about the countryside and to a comparatively easy life—was humiliated and frustrated by his insignificant job of pasting labels on bottles, at which he earned only six shillings a week, in a shoe-blacking factory.

Often, he later said on the few occasions he referred to this hard period of his life, he went to bed at night with bitter tears rolling down his face and with earnest prayers for deliverance from his almost unbearable circumstances. And yet those severe years proved valuable in preparing him to write much of his great fiction, for out of them came narratives that laid bare himself and were not descriptive of things apart. Also during those most impressionable years in his life he roamed the London streets and saw the seamy side of life from which he stored up in his mind much of the material for some of his great novels, such as *Oliver Twist* and *Old Curiosity Shop*. But what is essential to say in this connection is that what he felt and saw during those years probably did more than anything else in preparing him to render the great influence he did upon Christmas. From what we know of his poverty-stricken boyhood, of his sensitivity, and of what he wrote about needy people it is not difficult for us to believe that this poor boy must have looked often and wistfully, especially at Christmastime, at the lovely things he could not purchase from the great store windows. Christmas more than any other word sums up Dickens for he wrote directly about it and its meaning, especially for the needy, more than about anything else and even his writings not directly about this season lift up and promote its essential values. This hard period then was the chief influence that produced the Dickens many people have so closely identified with Christmas.

When his father's financial circumstances somewhat

improved, young Charles was sent again to school where he remained a year or two and then to a law office where he did not stay long, for the law did not especially attract him. Next we find him eagerly studying shorthand to prepare himself for newspaper reporting at which the alert young fellow seems to have been unusually successful. This work, as it has been in not a few other cases, was a fine preparation for his career as a novelist, in that it brought him into contact with many sides of life. At this time he began to show both a rare literary genius and a wonderful genius for friendship. Despite a certain self-assertiveness, and a more or less fierce intolerance of advice, he had at this early age, it is said, a remarkable personal attractiveness, a trait that was yet to grow to a marked degree. He was an unusually vibrant and charming young fellow with a small, compact figure, a shrewd-looking face of extreme mobility, clear-blue and intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arched amazingly, and, above all, a certain, indescribable magnetism that seemed almost independent of his physical features and looks, but was strongly felt by all who met him. Something entirely new came into the life of James T. Fields when he met this young English novelist of thirty in Boston. To this well-known American publisher and author, Dickens "seemed like the Emperor of cheerfulness on a cruise of leisure determined to conquer a realm or two of fun every hour of his overflowing existence." Fields said that he never saw a mortal before so much alive and on fire with curiosity. Like many others who met this newly famous English author during those exciting days this great Bostonian was constantly astonished at Dickens' vigor, keenness and freshness of spirit, and years later he particularly remembered how once this amazing young fellow "kept up a continuous shout of uproarious laughter as he went rapidly forward reading the signs on the shops and observing the architecture." Indeed, during his first visit to Boston the young novelist seemed younger than his thirty years. He walked the streets of the city, often late at night, and pranced and laughed like a happy boy. The old city famous for its enthusiastic welcomes to heroes and celebrities outdid herself in receiving Dickens on his first visit and then, it is said, she outdid herself again when this novelist came back many years later. The city's literary great entertained the young author with dinners, parties, and balls, and the people collected in crowds whenever he appeared in the streets. Boston adored and lionized him with wonderful enthusiasm, and so did many other American cities, as much for the joyousness and charm of the man as for his newly acquired fame.

Years later when Dickens gave public readings from his works in his own country and in the United States he probably drew and certainly held huge audiences as much, if not more, by his dramatic manner and indescribable personal charm and magnetism as by his fame and subject matter. Apparently he was one of those rare creatures equal to, if not greater than, Goethe and Burns, in the possession of a strange power of winning the adoration and affection of people. Not only did he possess this power to enrapture many people but also an integrity of character and a genuine love for his fellowmen that made not a few persons who knew him personally and well to think as Carlyle did when he remarked about Dickens' "rare and great worth as a brother man."

The literary genius of Dickens emerged and blossomed very early in his life. His first creative writing with the title, *A Dinner at Popular Walls,* appeared when the author was twenty-one. It won no special recognition. Neither did his first sketches of Pickwick which appeared in 1836. But *Sam Weller* coming out that same year won instantaneous and enormous recognition. At twenty-four Dickens was suddenly and amazingly famous. From that time until his death he wrote with an almost incredible intensity, rapidly improving his art and the quality of his novels, constantly increasing the number of his readers, rejoicing in his ever-spreading fame, and prematurely wearing himself out. Great wealth like great fame came to him. He fulfilled a boyish dream of purchasing Gadshill, a piece of property near Rochester, which he rebuilt after his own notions. But he never cared to stay long away from his beloved London where the rattle and the noise and the crowds gave him his best opportunity and incentive to select his characters and his greatest inspiration to write. Despite a few domestic troubles and sorrows his homelife was extremely happy. His three great loves were London, children, and Christmas, and these three much of the time were closely related to one another in his affections. He had great compassion for the poor children looking wistfully into the windows of the London stores, especially during the Christmas season. He was extremely fond of his own children, and likely, partly because the good things of Christmas had been denied him during much of his boyhood, he loved to take his children to the great stores at this season and to let them buy what they wanted. For years as the Yuletide season approached he wrote a Christmas story for his children. His *Life of Christ* was also written for them.

Worn and burnt out far too early by excessive work and the intense life he lived, Dickens died prematurely at the age of fifty-eight. Those closely associated with him knew the strain he had been under and they feared fatal consequences from his worried and strenuous life. But to the world at large the sudden passing of its favorite author was a severe shock. In England his death was regarded as a national calamity. The London crowds felt that a heavy weight had fallen upon them. An American visitor wrote, "The crowds seemed to walk the streets with muffled feet." To his genius and to his place in the hearts of the people, *The London Times* paid this tribute: "Charles Dickens is no more. The loss of such a man makes the ordinary expression of regret seem cold and conventional. It will be felt by millions as a personal bereavement."

Not only in his own day but also since his death has Dickens been read and loved as few other men have. And so the influence he gave to the world, especially to Christmas, is still with us and growing continually among us, although this influence probably does not come to us today so much from reading his books as from our sensitiveness to the humanitarian values which have gradually seeped into our corporate life in no small measure through his advocacy of them. Time which tests the true worth of a man is proving that Dickens was not only popular but also great.

Today Dickens is probably not read much the year round although two of his books, *The Pickwick Papers* and *David Copperfield* are on the list of books that colleges recommend. Literary tastes change. His stories are perhaps a little too melodramatic for present-day readers. Accustomed to the concise, almost journalistic style of the modern novel and the rapid technique and the hurried emotions of the motion pictures, the

radio, and the television, most people today probably want it put over faster than Dickens did. But this great English novelist comes to life every Christmas. As we come into this beloved Yuletide season we turn back to him to recapture the human values and the joy of living that this season now represents more because of him than any other writer. Every Christmas his familiar and beloved *A Christmas Carol* is read, put on over the radio, and acted in churches and clubs by an increasing number of people. For a number of years now Lionel Barrymore's wonderful portrayal of Old Scrooge over the radio has been regarded by countless people as an important event of the Christmas season. The power of this old, ever-new story to move our hearts, to touch the finest chords in them, and to make them human and young is enduring. This story has a deep and abiding place in the heart of mankind. It is universal and immortal.

*A Christmas Carol* was written when its author was thirty-one. Young Dickens, it is said, wept and laughed and walked the streets of London much of the time while he was writing this masterpiece. At the time it received a very sympathetic and wonderful reception. Even the great critic, Francis Jeffrey, who had treated Wordsworth and some other authors so harshly, wept over this book and when a literary critic weeps that's a miracle. Since then this beloved story has gone round the world many times, reducing and putting down the selfish, inhuman Scrooge in many people and bringing their often dormant tenderness and compassion and powers to laugh and to give to rich and wonderful blossoming. It breaks through and tears away the inhuman, materialistic debris that is around many hearts much of the time and calls the best in them, the true selves in them, to a new springtime. It makes not a few hearts young, fresh, spontaneous, and natural.

When we think of Dickens' relation to Christmas we think chiefly, I believe, of the influence of his Christmas stories such as *A Christmas Carol, The Chimes,* and *The Cricket on the Hearth.* But really, as the late Gilbert Chesterton pointed out, all his books are Christmas books in the sense that they lift up the infinite worth of human personality, the joy of living, and the Christian attitude that the Christ born in Bethlehem taught and that the Christmas season more than any other time of the year brings to our minds. One of Dickens' best non-fiction books was *A Life of Christ.* His novels brought a new world of respect and kindness for children. They did much to abolish bullying and cruelty in schools, hard conditions in work houses and imprisonment for debt. They started a new day of social reform. Daniel Webster claimed that Dickens was the greatest humanizing and reforming force in England, and, we would add, in many other countries. Through the influence of this great novelist many people were made more sensitive to new shades of gentleness and loveliness in family life. Dickens put charity and cheerfulness together as if they rightfully belonged together. His ideal picture of Christmas is a group of people enjoying themselves in a happy, uplifted atmosphere, making one another feel finer as if it were a perfectly natural thing to do. There is sufficiency and good cheer in many homes every Christmas largely because this writer moved the heart of Old Scrooge to send a turkey to a needy family. Such conditions have been brought about not only, and likely not chiefly, by the readers of Dickens but also by many others who have been influenced by the Christmas values and Yuletide climate which this great novelist did much to increase. Doubtless at every Christmas many people, including not a few who seldom or never read this English writer, say, "God bless you, every one," or something of a similar meaning, because he put these hearty and earnest words into the mouth of Tiny Tim.

Insofar as we increase our belief in the dignity and worth of man, acquire greater respect and love for our fellow-humans, become more eager to give, especially to the needy, and find and put more joy in our life-situations, we increasingly recapture the spirit of Charles Dickens, the true spirit of Christmas, and help to continue the influence that this great humanitarian brought into our human world.

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# An Ethical Paradox

GEORGE E. O'DELL

There are several striking paradoxes of the moral life; for instance that to be happy we should not concentrate on being so; that the ethical absolute is a matter of relationships; that to be most finely individual we need to illustrate universal principles. Another such dichotomy is at least as important: that we should be morally severe with ourselves but less so towards others. This is a hard principle and many persons are revolted by it. But psychology and logic support it, as well as the wise organization of social life. Religion, in the measure that it is modern and civilized, is on its side.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" was self-protective and, while valuable, is inadequate, as is also the injunction to treat others as though ourselves. They are rough rules only; as in the case of forgetting happiness, we need to forget ourselves if we are to be generously just and constructively helpful towards others who have a claim upon us. So we may gain happiness, and so we may, equally unconscious by the way, become better persons.

Of course Jesus, as reported, fully understood this and his tenderness illustrated it. But, paradoxically, there is attributed to him a denunciatory spirit which can seem to our present-day scientific knowledge and insight to be very harsh indeed,—until we remember what is now known by the critical student of records concerning the historic background and apocalyptic nature of First Century beliefs. In the idyllic community about to be established on earth by miraculous means the "good" were to be segregated and the unrepentant refused either immediate admission or any second chance. The dream of a new earthly paradise there and then being presently dissipated and heaven moved in believers' thoughts to a life after death, Catholicism humanely devised purgatory, though Protestantism, later, retained the original harshness; it *judged,* and that for the unrepentant sinner or, worse, the heretic, was the end of the matter.

But let us look awhile at the two items in our paradox. First, we should strictly judge ourselves. It is a strange yet explicable fact that, among the conven-

tionally religious, it is the most innocent and harmless who tend most to suffer from a sense of imperfection and guilt. And in the degree that, let us say, any of us come to feel the impelling nature of ethical ideals, we suffer shame at not always living up to them as unreservedly as we know we should. We condemn ourselves for selfish or careless conduct, for failure to follow "the best we know." Nor would we escape all punishment. Escape by penitence only is not the finest ethics. Merely to confess a fault, however heinous, to promise however sincerely not to repeat it, and to be absolved on condition of performing certain symbolic rites—what is this? Certainly conventional Christianity has helped arouse a moral sensitiveness not previously so widely known, but does the offender who really repents want to escape punishment only in so naïve a way? In the measure that he has risen above, or been born and bred above, moral crudity, does he not *want* punishment, even though it should consist only in lasting silent shame at his past erring self and the constant urge to atone by redoubled, even difficult, helpfulness to his fellows in the world? For past derelictions or unkindness, if serious, can one *ever* atone? Merely to try to be more actively good is only what one should do anyhow. Many sensitive souls may rather seek to suffer even for mere past callousness, unloving forgetfulness, what not. For them no absolution wipes out the past; the scarlet can never come to be seen as white. It is one of life's tragedies that we so often learn goodness by the experience of failure in duly practicing it—though this may add some zest to existence, the zest of the compensating struggle after better ways. Such punishment, for the morally sensitive, can be part of the texture of a right life.

Further, we cannot forgive ourselves because of this or that contributory cause in defective inheritance, bad home influences, wrong companionships, excessive temptations. It is in the very nature of conscience to refuse to escape thus from self-condemnation. But, to turn now to our fellows, "judge not" should surely be taken to mean not blindness but sympathetic understanding and the will to help. It may be a postulate—such is the paradox—which we should apply most narrowly if at all to ourselves, but our fellows are, at least at the moment, what they are, and mere fault-finding will not change them. Besides, we know ourselves, but we cannot know all the inner conditions of others' mental being nor all the circumstances which have contributed towards forming their delinquent personalities. Did we know all, we might wonder they are no worse than we find them to be! In the measure that the psychologist, the psychiatrist, the sociologist, and the historian of recent times have helped open our eyes, we can bear better with the lapses, the unkindnesses, the stumbles and falls or deliberate selfishness of our "neighbors," even of our intimates, as our forbears more rarely did.

But if thus in our personal intercourse, what of social self-protection? Are we right to punish? Certainly no mere "softness" towards offenders is called for; sometimes rather the contrary; for instance, many a life-timer would better never be returned to freedom; though the whole method of incarceration needs rethinking and replanning, as is already slowly being done, with emphasis as much on what is best for the prisoner and may bring him into better ways, as on either a just reprisal or the deterrence of others.

But this is illustrative only. The thought to be expressed here is as to the need of continual refashioning of our ways, in the light of modern knowledge, so that fundamental ethical demands, long discerned and proclaimed by one and another ethical genius, may break through the crust of traditional and ineffective practice and promote more right human living. That was a plea in what is perhaps the greatest of all writings on Christian ethics, Sir John Seeley's *Ecce Homo,* that moral practice must not be literalist and merely traditional and conservative, but be rethought progressively in terms of our own or any later time; otherwise, said Seeley to his fellow believers: "Unto what then were ye baptized?" Established religion must modernize our social conscience, or it will, slowly or quickly, be scrapped; and that might be tragic. Science alone does not produce unselfishness and the feeling for human brotherhood; only a religious spirit, not hidebound by precedent or antiquity but open to new insight and experiment in better ways of social organization as well as personal conduct, can substantially do that.

Mercifully it has become more possible, and circumstances have helped. For example, when there were few prisons or none, the death penalty or cruel transportation for even small crimes were obvious means for the disposal of offending persons. Mounting prosperity in communities, while incidentally it increased temptations, also made possible the growth of a more humane spirit, and the civilizing influence both of religious ethics and of the advancing social sciences. "Advancing," yes. Even so recent a student of criminology as Lombroso is already outmoded. We can today assume few if any sane criminals to have been "born to be bad"; we can discern personality sources which call for drastic, if slow, changes in the institutions and conditions which in part make men what at any given time in their lives they are. It is not a matter for criticism only, of parents, homes, schools, churches, ways of making a living, except as criticism promotes practical changes.

So, too, with ourselves. Self-criticism is not to be barren; the more uncompromising it is, the more it demands rational rearrangement in our ways. Herein is the paradox resolved. Whether for others or ourselves "judgment" is not enough. Strictness towards ourselves, constructive helpfulness towards others,—both call for positive action in making a right life easier for all.

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## THE FIELD

(*Continued from page* 50)

duce the cost of coal production. Use of fuel oil for heating, cooking, bath, and other purposes not absolutely requiring oil, would be regulated. However, fuel oil would be assured for farming, lumbering, fishing, and shipping.

The reasons for this policy are unrealistic and inconsistent. The government is attempting to aid the coal industry, which has been operating at a loss, partly through strikes, partly through obsolescent equipment, antiquated methods, etc. Meanwhile no compensation will be paid to consumers who have already converted from coal to fuel oil. Both the affected industries and the press have been critical, while irritation grows.

*Worldover Press.*

# Observations After Thirteen Years In Chicago

EDWIN T. BUEHRER

Sunday, December 7, 1941 was "Pearl Harbor Sunday"; and that evening, with Dr. Eustace Haydon giving the principal address, I was installed as minister of the Third Unitarian Church in Chicago. There has been no real peace in the world since that day, as indeed there has been no real peace for more than a generation. Three hundred years ago Europe had what was known as the "Thirty Years War." When we read about it in our history books we were reminded by our teacher in the little one-room school that we were fortunate to live in a more civilized period of human history. And now we have had a 40-year war, with the end not in sight. It could stretch to fifty years; it could continue during the remainder of the lifetime of many of us. There may be a truce in Korea, and we may be saved from another World War, but the best we can hope for is an armed truce. It is not unlikely that both Russia and our country need some kind of armed peace at this juncture in world affairs—Russia to goad her people to greater effort, and America to stimulate her industry through war production. Moreover, it is a situation over which neither nation has complete control.

This age of war is our age of transition from one kind of world and way of life to another kind. We often speak and write about "the problem of living in a changing world." *This* is our changing world. Most people are aware of it in a vague and confused sort of way, without being aware of the changes which will have to be wrought in their own minds and in their accustomed ways of living before they will be equipped to help the forward march of the world rather than to be a drag on progress by opposing change at every point. The difference between those two attitudes is the difference between a liberal and a conservative. Changes can be unpleasant experiences and always inconvenient. Changing one's job, or one's home, or one's church, or one's basic philosophy of life is always a major enterprise; and many people shrink from it as from a disaster. When Louis XVI, the autocratic and luxury-loving king of France, was being prepared for his execution he is supposed to have said: "I have seen this coming for the past ten years; how was it possible that I never wanted to believe it?"

It was quite possible. To have wanted to believe it would have required the King to give up all the glamor of a living to which he was accustomed, and that he had neither the will nor the character to do. Our century started as the great century of peace and progress; and many writers were concerned lest too much peace and quiet might have a bad effect on our character. We had reason to be warned, however, that it might not always remain that way, for our technological progress alone was sure, sooner or later, to disturb that calm and to keep it disturbed for the remainder of our century. It is characteristic, now, for men and women of my own age—slightly past the middle—to recall how in our lifetime we have seen more scientific and technological progress than was achieved during all the centuries of human history that went before. It sounds astonishing to put it that way, but it is true. We have seen the coming of the phonograph, the motion picture, the automobile, the airplane, radio, television, and atomic energy, to mention only the more important ones. I said it was characteristic of us that we think of and mention these things; but they are important because they are the mechanical side of religious, cultural, political, and other changes which have accompanied and followed them. I will name a few:

During my lifetime I, or we, have seen the Russian Revolution and the emergence of Communism in the world.

We have seen the rise and decline of Fascism in Europe and its re-emergence, more recently, in South America and other places.

We have seen, in day-by-day events, the elimination of Germany and Japan as world powers.

We have seen the independence of India, something for which Indians, Christians, and liberals the world around had hoped and labored for a century.

We have seen the rise and break up of the League of Nations, and its resurrection in the United Nations.

We have seen Communism come to China, in a tidal wave of political and economic overturn that has now embraced one-third of the population of the earth.

We have seen the emergence of two giant nations—only two first-class powers in the world—standing like opposite poles, and attracting to themselves the lesser nations like magnets attracting iron scraps and shavings.

These mighty historic events we have witnessed with our own eyes; but we have also witnessed the human consequences, both good and bad, which have come as a result. We have seen the disorder accompanying these changes: forced migration, famine, terror, and concentration camps on a scale never before known.

We have seen a new word insinuate itself into our dictionary. The word is *genocide,* which means the deliberate murder of peoples in the mass. We have seen that, and we have seen the United Nations draft a law which makes genocide a universal crime, subject to legal punishment. We have seen a world rehabilitation program—the bringing of the ministry of food and clothing to countless millions on a scale beyond the most utopian dreams of a hundred years ago or fifty years ago.

In such a world as ours it is no wonder that people should get hurt on a large scale, helped and healed on a large scale, confused on a large scale. In such a world it is little wonder that people should be divided in their loyalties and set against one another in strange and terrifying ways. It would indeed be astonishing if in a world with very little calm on the outside, there would be great calm and peace inside us; nor is it surprising that some people are fatalists to the point of despair, overwhelmed with the tragedy of so much injury and waste, everywhere, and that others are lifted up and thrilled with the limitless possibilities of good which every change brings with it. A world of great change is a world of great contrasts, of white and black, of great evil and great good, of dark despair and of high hope.

Fifty-three years ago nobody ever saw an automobile; today nobody ever sees a horse and buggy.

It would require a colossal research undertaking to measure adequately the social, political, economic, intellectual and emotional changes that this one novelty has brought about. It would be fantastic, would it not, to witness all the other changes which I have enumerated, and not to expect such disturbances as war, revolution, Communism, Fascism, genocide, and concentration camps? The more than two billion people living in the world today—most of whom were fairly young back in 1914, or were born since then—have taken upon themselves, in some form or other, the full impact of changes and overturnings from which there will be no return. In the process we might have expected that many high hopes would be dashed to the ground, though many new possibilities of human progress and of growth would emerge. But when hopes are too ruthlessly dashed to the ground, too long deferred, too seldom fulfilled, people turn to strong leaders, strong voices, self-assured religions to give them the strength and the assurance which they do not of themselves possess. Emotional disturbance is one of the characteristics of our age.

All these constitute the soil and climate in which our children must be educated, in which our political maturity must be achieved, and in which our religion and our faith must somehow be hammered out; and if you are inclined to be pessimistic you have powerful arguments to justify your present mood. These things disturb us because we have to take them into account; and it is at this point where the difference between our concept of religion and the concept of the more conservative or fundamentalist groups comes into full relief. It is the major concern of religious orthodoxy ultimately to escape the laws and realities of our natural existence, whereas it is our major concern to come to grips with them. For these otherworldly faiths, such problems as international relations, civil rights, public health, interracial friendliness and education, are only incidental to the central purpose of salvation which they call spirituality or true religion. For us, these concerns and our personal and social relation to them are not incidental but primary. That is the essential difference.

There is an impressive story in the Old Testament about the City of Sodom. It is the story of a city doomed to destruction because of the wickedness and corruption of the people. They were to be destroyed unless fifty "righteous" men and women could be found living there. Abraham appealed for Sodom, and asked that it be spared if forty-five righteous could be found. The Lord agreed. Abraham next asked for mercy if forty could be found, then thirty, then twenty, and finally ten. The city was at last destroyed because not even ten men and women, sufficiently responsible and concerned, were there to save it. How many men and women, concerned about the fate of the world, will it require to save the world? To save the United Nations? To save Russian-American relations? It is astonishing how often in history an infinitesimal minority made the difference.

Never since Protestantism first launched out have there been so many changes from denomination to denomination—from Catholicism to Methodism, to Presbyterianism, to Congregationalism and, occasionally, to Unitarianism. Protestantism's larger denominations, boasting some thirty million members, are moving towards a level of unity never possible, and are now engaged in finding somewhere in the Middle West a city which, as their office headquarters, will become "The Protestant Capital" of America. Far from quarreling over theological differences, they read each other's books, consolidate their economic and administrative resources, and exchange ministers and memberships.

Such a movement towards a higher level of unity is also in evidence among our more liberal religious groups, of which Unitarianism is one. The solid Christianity of the Middle Ages—the unbroken unity of faith with one shepherd and one fold—cannot compare with the multiplicity of denominations and points of view. The hope is that not only in religion, but in our political and economic thinking—and our varied cultures—unity on a higher level will emerge, not because we will all become alike, but because we all respect and accept our differences. This is a sign of hope, but there are other signs.

Roman Catholicism is powerful and aggressive, as all its pressures upon our educational and cultural life would indicate, but science is on our side, not theirs; the open discussion and methods of democracy are on our side, not theirs; our traditions and habits of freedom are on our side, not theirs; the whole trend of modern living, whether it be planned parenthood, or the rejection of our belief in myth or miracle, or the concept of individual capacity and right is on our side. If we lose to Catholicism, we lose by default. Orthodoxy, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish, can never be certain but what questions and doubts from within will undermine its position. The movement of modern culture and thought is a movement—despite occasional setbacks and losses—away from orthodoxy. Moreover, the movement away from orthodoxy is often a lay movement, which is to say a "grass-roots" movement. Jesus and his disciples were laymen, not ordained leaders. There was not a single rabbi among them, and Jesus himself was never recognized as a colleague among the leaders of his faith. Buddha and his disciples constituted themselves as a self-designated movement, without the blessing or consent of the religious leaders of their time. The Quakers have always been a lay movement, without professionally trained ministers or leaders. Our Unitarian Church, though professionally led, has nevertheless during this past decade, enjoyed unprecedented growth largely because laymen have taken the initiative in organizing themselves as fellowships in more than a hundred communities and cities of America. These small groups and cells of religious liberals, detached from other denominations, are among the most dynamic Unitarians of which we can now boast. Nor is it a secret that this method of launching a movement through the dynamic fellowship of handfuls of dedicated men and women has been the secret of success of Communism as well as of the Christian, Buddhist, Humanist, and other religions. The success of the small group depends upon the integrity of belief of those composing it, their complete commitment to the cause, their dependability in accepting responsibility, and their regularity in fellowship.

Professor Whitehead once said that in the development of a cause or a movement there is no middle road. Either we go forward, or we go backward. To settle down is to disintegrate.

Liberal movements at this stage of history move slowly, and must overcome many discouragements.

The odds against us are great, but so are the forces working on our side—and we have our rewards. To have people who tried many other religious systems and churches come to us and say, "I never knew there was such a church, or that there could be such a church —and here, at last, I have found it," is one of our rewards. To have people of other races and cultures come to us and say, "This church is my refuge; I feel at home here and among friends," is one of our rewards. To see children and young people fashion here an understanding of what liberalism in all its aspects is all about is one of our rewards.

Liberalism is Americanism. It says, give the man of average intelligence the necessary facts and information, and he will choose the right course.

Liberalism is Democracy. It says, trust people to do the right thing, and in most cases they will be trustworthy.

Liberalism is progress. It takes its chances with movement and change and the unfamiliar. It launches out into the unknown, seeking new doors and pathways into the future.

Liberalism is the strongest bulwark against dictatorship either from the right or from the left.

Liberalism is our greatest inspiration for the constant struggle against religious bigotry and intolerance.

Never before has America stood in such great need of religious liberalism as it does today. Never before have there been so many books, techniques, sciences, discoveries, leaders available to us, although they do not always assume the label of Unitarianism. Never before have so many causes clamored for our support.

We need each other. We need the church, for the liberal church is by its very nature on our side, fighting our battles. The liberal church needs us; and you can travel the world around and find nothing more exciting, or challenging or stimulating, or free, than our fellowship. Our opportunity here, for commitment to every high and worthy cause, is limitless. Again it was Professor Whitehead who said shortly before his death that future historians looking back, to our age, may say that this was another continental divide in history, the divide that made the difference between continued freedom and growth, on the one hand, and the leveling off and decline of civilization as we have known it. Ours is the opportunity to believe that what liberals are doing today, though they are a small minority, may make the final difference. Because I believe that, my hope is always greater than my despair —my optimism always greater than my pessimism. I wish I could persuade all persons to share that faith and that hope with me.

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# On Being Loyal

KARL M. CHWOROWSKY

With the sacred word "loyalty" on our lips, we are today preparing to sacrifice our highest loyalties and substitute for them those lower and lesser loyalties that the unthinking mob is so quick to mouth, so ready to sing and shout because the true loyalties that have led mankind upward and onward mean so little to irresponsible people in terms of serious thinking, bold witnessing, and courageous action. In the current hysterical scramble for loyalty legislation and loyalty demonstrations, we are forgetting the substance and essence of genuine loyalty as we wildly run after those shadows and will-o-the-wisps that we naively mistake for "loyalties."

We might well stop for a moment and survey rationally and coolly those movements in our national life that today in the name of "loyalty" are actually seeking to commit us to acts of disloyalty that in the end must prove disastrous to all those values we as Americans hold so dear. It is not easy to define the concept "loyalty," but these negative and affirmative observations may be of some help:

(1) Loyalty is not acquiescence in things as they are, a smug acceptance of the *status quo* whether in politics, economics, education, religion or any other department of human life; loyalty is not a blind conformity, a thoughtless "me too" attitude towards propositions we have never seriously thought through or subjected to intellectual scrutiny and critical survey; loyalty is not a preference for everything American, coupled with a fanatic dislike of everything "alien"; loyalty is not an automatic participation in ceremonies, a perfunctory saluting of the flag and mumbling of an oath of allegiance, nor is it a loud shouting about the real or imaginary excellencies of the American government and people. In other words, loyalty is not a specific creed, not a particular interpretation of history, not a body of economic or political doctrines, not an established pattern of preferred social mores.

(2) On the other hand, loyalty is, in the noblest meaning of the term, a principle, an ideal, as well as a fervent personal dedication to what good men and women of all ages have come to recognize as of supreme worth and abiding value. In the words of a prominent contemporary American historian, loyalty "is a willingness to subordinate every private advantage for the larger good. It is an appreciation of the rich and diverse contributions that can come from the most varied sources. It is allegiance to the traditions that have guided our greatest statesmen and inspired our most eloquent poets—the traditions of freedom, equality, democracy, tolerance, the tradition of the higher law, of experimentation, coöperation, and pluralism. It is a realization that America was born of revolt, flourished on dissent, became great through experimentation."

Too many of our citizens today are flaunting the word "loyalty" on banners and posters, are holding loyalty parades and rallies, are shouting loyalty-slogans and shibboleths, and I wonder how many of these lusty shouters and self-styled "patriots" also have "loyalty" engraved on their hearts and written in their consciences as a Law of God that asks more than lip-service, viz., commitment to the highest thoughts of God and man. Are not too many of us kneeling before false Gods as we proclaim our loyalties; are we not too often substituting loyalty to Baal, to Mammon, and to Moloch for loyalty to the God who asks us to "love thy neighbor as thyself"? How many so-called "loyal Americans" are today forgetting that they cannot be truly loyal to America unless they are also loyal to something bigger than America; that they cannot be loyal to

freedom and democracy unless they are willing to practice these high ideals towards their fellow citizens as well as towards their fellow men in the larger world? How much of the loyalty and allegiance many of us profess and loudly proclaim has any vital relation to those concepts of freedom and democracy that were held by men like Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt? And need I tell you that loyalty to American ideals of life and government means something quite different from what is today being proclaimed in portions of our press, shouted from public platforms, and spread abroad by allegedly "loyal" publications?

We are facing one of the most critical periods in American history. Our America stands today as the leader among the nations of the world, not only because of her tremendous industrial, economic, and military potential, not only because of her advanced scientific achievements and almost unlimited physical resources and know-how, but primarily because of the devotion her people have always shown to the immortal ideals of freedom, tolerance, and equality. If we are to meet the challenge of this day, if we are to face our "shining hour" with stout hearts, with sturdy spirit, and with faces uplifted to the stars, we cannot afford to let fanaticism blur our vision nor bigotry and parochialism mislead and hamper us. We simply cannot afford to substitute lesser loyalties for those greater loyalties, devotion to which has made this land great and woven the halo of immortality around the figures of our heroes of the past and present.

To remain loyal in this larger and higher sense, we must keep mentally alert and critically aware of our own shortcomings, of the obvious imperfections of our institutions; we must be unafraid even to oppose our government where we feel that intelligent and patriotic opposition is needed; we must not let fear of external or internal enemies frighten us into committing blunders that are bound to hurt us more than our enemies; we must fear nothing so much as fear itself and learn to recognize that no disloyalty is more dangerous than disloyalty to ourselves as a people, treason to the best in our American tradition and outlook. We need anew these days the adventurous spirit of the pioneers, of those who dared explore new regions not only geographically but also spiritually.

That nation is certain to assume and retain world leadership today, and only that nation can today lead mankind towards peace and prosperity which practices a loyalty in keeping with the highest traditions and convictions of the race, which spurns appeasement of and compromise with political expediency, and in a world blinded by confusion and torn with bigotries stands bravely dedicated and consecrated to those dreams of prophet and saint that have nourished the faith and sustained the hopes of men and women in every age and in every land. May it be granted our beloved America to lead the world to such heights, and we shall do so if only our loyalties remain unsullied, our allegiance to God's and Man's highest thoughts remains uncompromised, and our devotion to the well-being of all nations, races, and peoples remains unmoved.

Loyalty to America today can only mean what it has always meant, viz., renewed dedication to our ideals of freedom and democracy which is but another way of saying that we must hold fast and defend to the last our faith in God and Fellowman.


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## The Study Table

### Modern Mysticism

MAN'S HIDDEN SEARCH. *By Kenneth L. Patton. Boston: Meeting House Press.* 123 pp. $2.50.

In these pages Kenneth Patton has expressed in naturalistic terms and scientific concepts a type of modern mysticism which for the most part makes sense. There is a sensitivity and awareness of man's relationship to his environment which contributes much to the reader's understanding and appreciation of himself as a creature of and in nature. Through most of the chapters a clear distinction is maintained between his inquiry into naturalistic mysticism and that of traditional theological mysticism. However, in later chapters the line of demarcation becomes a bit blurred. In these chapters Patton becomes as chummy and identified with the universe as any medieval mystic with God, and also comes perilously close to making a similar claim of possessing a subjective and intuitive authority.

Many times during the reading of this book one who is familiar with the poetic phrases and insights of Amustafa, the Prophet, spoken to the people of Orphalese, will recall them and find their meaning clearly spelled out by Mr. Patton in symbols and concepts meaningful to modern Western man.

RANDALL S. HILTON.

# Western Unitarian Conference

700 Oakwood Boulevard, Chicago 15, Illinois
RANDALL S. HILTON, Executive Secretary

## FRANCES WOOD FIELD TRIP

Miss Frances Wood, Associate Director of Field Services and Education Consultant for the Council of Liberal Churches (Universalist-Unitarian), will make an extensive field trip, under the auspices of the Council, in the Western Conference beginning the end of January. This will not consist of field visits to individual churches, but instead will be a series of workshop meetings in several geographic areas to which all Unitarian and Universalist groups will be invited. Her schedule for the trip is as follows, and in each instance there is indicated the "contact" person for the particular workshop:

January 28-30—Toledo, Ohio
Mrs. John K. Seldon, 2210 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo 10, Ohio

January 31—South Bend, Indiana
Mrs. Leah Friedman, 101 E. North Shore Drive, South Bend, Indiana

February 2—Madison, Wisconsin
Rev. Max Gaebler, 900 University Bay Drive, Madison 5, Wisconsin

February 4-5—Chicago, Illinois
Rev. Vincent B. Silliman, 10207 So. Union Street, Chicago 28, Illinois

February 7-8—Omaha, Nebraska
Mrs. David Peterson, 7088 Charles Street, Omaha, Nebraska

February 11-12—Minneapolis, Minnesota
Mrs. B. A. McClellan, 900 Mount Curve, Minneapolis 5, Minnesota

February 14-15, Des Moines, Iowa
Rev. Charles W. Phillips, 1027 High Street, Des Moines 9, Iowa

February 18-19—Kansas City, Missouri
Mrs. Harry Adams, 4500 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City 2, Missouri

February 22-23—Urbana, Illinois
Rev. Arnold Westwood, 1209 W. Oregon Street, Urbana, Illinois

February 25-26—Indianapolis, Indiana
Mrs. Fritz Schaefer, 1453 N. Alabama, Indianapolis 2, Indiana

March 2—Louisville, Kentucky
Rev. Robert T. Weston, Fourth & York Streets, Louisville 3, Kentucky

March 4-5—Cincinnati, Ohio
Mrs. C. F. Osborne, 4146 Jamestown, Cincinnati 5, Ohio

These workshops with Miss Wood and others will be of great benefit to all who participate. Be sure that your Religious Education Committee and staff are well represented at the one nearest to you.

## ???????

Have you remembered the Abraham Lincoln Centre elevator fund? What better Christmas or New Year's present could you or your organization give than a cash contribution for this purpose. Every dollar you give keeps a dollar invested to carry on the Centre's important and significant program.

## CONFERENCE APPEAL COMMITTEE

The United Unitarian Appeal is off to a good start in the Western Conference. An outstanding Conference Appeal Committee has been appointed. The committee is composed of the chairmen for the various sub-regional areas plus the general chairman and certain ex-officio members. The members of the committee are:

Frank H. Schramm, Burlington; Chairman
R. Wm. Halbach, Quincy, (Abraham Lincoln Area)
Roger V. Dickeson, Lincoln, (Iowa-Nebraska)
Wallace W. Robbins, Chicago, (Chicago Area)
F. Price Watts, Grosse Pointe, (Michigan Area)
Eugene Sloane, Minneapolis, (Minnesota Area)
Robert G. Risk, Indianapolis, (Ohio Valley Area)
Evans Worthley, Sterling, (Rocky Mountain Area)
C. David Connolly, Rockford, President U.U.A.
Stanton Smith, Rockford, Chairman Special Gifts
Randall S. Hilton, Chicago, Regional Director

Every member of this committee is ready to help any and all local churches and fellowships in raising their Appeal. The churches have received their suggested shares. The committee is asking each fellowship to set its goal at an amount equal to $5.00 a member.

The over-all goal for the Western Conference this year is $74,450. This can be reached if each church and fellowship makes a genuine attempt to reach its quota. Materials for mailing are available from the general headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Massachusetts. Slides, scripts, and speakers are available through your area chairman.

"A Rising Tide Lifts All the Boats." Unitarians are on the march. Let us keep them marching by providing the necessary funds.

## GENEVA

Where? College Camp, Wisconsin on beautiful Lake Geneva.

When? June 26 to July 2, 1955.

What? A program for the whole family. Laboratory classes for the primary, junior, and junior high ages; Alliance workshops; lectures, discussions, panels and "bull sessions" in many different fields, on many different subjects. Lots of fun for all!

Why? There will be fellowship with Unitarians and Universalists from all over the Midwest. You will achieve increased knowledge and improved methods. You will have a vacation while learning. You will benefit yourself and your church through the "know-how," enthusiasm, and inspiration gained at Geneva.

How? Send registration ($5.00) now to Mrs. Esther L. Heinrich, 132 N. Menard Street, Chicago 44, Illinois. Also, build up your scholarship funds to help delegates attend.

## H.S.—L.R.Y.

The high school program for Geneva is in preparation. David Parke will be the director again this year. Arrangements are being made to handle an increase in enrollment. Last year with 70 in the group the facilities were crowded. This year we hope to have accommodations for 100.

In conjunction with, and as an integrated part of, the youth program there will be a laboratory workshop for youth counsellors and advisors.

## APPOINTMENTS TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Each of the sub-regional areas which met last month were asked to appoint representatives to two Western Conference committees, the Program-Planning Committee and the Nominating Committee. The members of the Program-Planning Committee are:

Thaddeus B. Clark, St. Louis, (Abraham Lincoln)
Homer A. Jack, Evanston, (Chicago Area)
John W. Brigham, Sioux City, (Iowa-Nebraska)
Edward H. Redman, Ann Arbor, (Michigan)
Arthur Foote, St. Paul, (Minnesota)
Mrs. Irene von Stilli, Louisville, (Ohio Valley)
Hurley Begun, Colorado Springs, (Rocky Mountain)
Jack Mendelsohn, Jr., Indianapolis, (W.U.C. Board)
Randall S. Hilton, Chicago, (Ex-officio)

The members on the Nominating Committee and the areas they represent are:

Herbert Hines, Jr., Springfield, (Abraham Lincoln)
Harry Jones, Chicago, (Chicago Metropolitan)
Spencer Day, Sioux City, (Iowa-Nebraska)
Albert McCleary, Birmingham, (Michigan)
Walter Chapin, St. Paul, (Minnesota)
Mrs. Charles Van Dine, Dayton, (Ohio Valley)
Hurley Begun, Colorado Springs, (Rocky Mountain)

The chairman of this committee is to be appointed by the Executive Committee of the board at its next meeting.

## AREA CHAIRMEN

The chairmen of the sub-regional areas are:
Abraham Lincoln—H. Hadley Grimm, St. Louis
Chicago Area Conference—Harry Jones, Chicago
Iowa-Nebraska—Victor R. Seymour, Lincoln
Michigan—John H. Morgan, Flint
Minnesota—Kenneth J. Smith, Duluth
Ohio Valley—Robert T. Weston, Louisville
Rocky Mountain—Walter Pesman, Denver

## INSTALLATIONS

All Souls Unitarian Church of Chicago, formerly the Free Religious Fellowship, installed Rev. Ben Richardson as their minister on October 31, 1954.

The Unitarian Church of Davenport, Iowa, installed Rev. Waitstill H. Sharp as minister on November 29, 1954.

## ANNUAL MEETING—1955

It will not be long until the program will be out for the annual meetings of the Western Unitarian Conference. The meetings this year will be held in Des Moines, Iowa, April 22 to 24, 1955. An excellent program has been planned. It is not too early to be making arrangements to attend.

The Western Conference Branch of the Unitarian Ministers Association will meet prior to the Conference sessions.

## RESOLUTIONS

The By-laws of the Western Unitarian Conference require that resolutions to be considered at the annual meeting must be in the Conference office at least sixty days prior to the meeting. Thus those desiring to submit resolutions should have them in by February 22, 1955. This is done so that the Resolutions Committee may study them and send them out to the churches for study before the Conference acts upon them.

## UNIVERSALIST-UNITARIAN VISITATION

The heads of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations visited more than 20 Chicago area churches and fellowships during October in an effort to promote greater Universalist - Unitarian understanding. Dr. Brainard F. Gibbons, General Superintendent of the Universalist Church of America, and Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, spoke at an all-Chicago banquet inaugurating the five-day visitation to the churches. Almost 300 persons from the Chicago area attended the banquet, at which awards were given for longtime service in the area to Dr. Walter McPherson of the Universalist Church of Joliet and to Dr. Charles H. Lyttle of the Unitarian Church of Geneva and formerly of the faculty of the Meadville Theological School.

On Sunday, October 17, Dr. Eliot preached at the People's Church of Chicago, and Dr. Gibbons at the Third Unitarian Church. Some 18 other talks and addresses were given to churches, fellowships, women's groups, the Chicago Area Liberal Ministers, and the student body of Meadville Theological School. The visitation was sponsored by the Chicago Area Conference of Religious Liberals.

## STUDENT CONFERENCE

During the holidays, December 28 to January 1, the college and high school sections of the Liberal Religious Youth in the Western and Southwestern Conferences will meet at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Outstanding programs for learning, inspiration, and fun have been arranged. Registrations ($5.00) are to be sent to Rev. Christopher Moore, 5007 Waterman Avenue, St. Louis 8, Missouri.

## HOWARD B. HAUZE

His many friends will be interested in learning that Howard Hauze has left Chicago and moved to Berkely, California. He has taken the position as director of fund-raising for the Starr King School for the Ministry and the Pacific Coast Unitarian Council. Hauze, for several years the genial public relations director at Geneva, a member of the Western Conference Board, was formerly with the Wells Organizations.

## SERVICE COMMITTEE FILM

"The Green House Beside the Arroyo" is the new colored film provided by the Unitarian Service Committee to promote its work in general and the Navajo project in particular. The film is a work of art. It captures the beauty of the Arizona landscape, the integrity of the Navajo, and the sincerity of the service provided by the committee. It is a presentation of distinction and dignity.

After January 1 the film will be available through the office of the Western Unitarian Conference. Write now for the date you would like to have it. The showing requires a 16 mm. sound projector.

## GREETINGS!

We wish for all of you happy holidays and a prosperous New Year!

Dorothy Schaad.

Randall S. Hilton.